

## **Annual Report of the Environment and Energy Committee**

### **April 18, 2016**

The Environment and Energy Committee's overarching goal is to help Chevy Chase Village become a sustainable community. It aims to do this by supporting efforts to reduce the Village's overall environmental footprint through, for example, conserving energy, reducing pollution and waste, enhancing the Village's urban forest and green space, reducing noise pollution and runoff, and greening residential and Village landscaping practices. The E&E Committee seeks to raise awareness of these issues by sponsoring lectures and working with neighboring communities to share good practices. These goals and objectives are included in the Environment and Energy Committee's updated Mission Statement, which was approved by the Board in January 2015.

#### **Committee Membership**

Marilyn Bracken and Marea Hatzios Grant, Co-Chairs

Members include Valery Amiel, Oliver Davidson, Susie Eig, Jonathan Lyons, Diane Pape, Betsy Stephens, Ralph Stephens, Catherine Demmerle,

Board Contact: Gary Crockett

#### **Activities in 2015**

The Environment and Energy Committee:

- Organized a Sustainable Living Lecture Series designed to inform residents about current issues of interest around the theme of sustainable communities and sustainable living.
  - The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, our representative from Maryland's 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, delivered the inaugural lecture. The topic was a congressional update on climate change, including a discussion of new proposed legislation introduced by the Congressman to curb CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  - The second lecture in the series was delivered by Dr. Douglas Tallamy, in partnership with The Little Falls Watershed Alliance and the Town of Somerset. Dr. Tallamy spoke on "living landscapes" and "bringing nature home," emphasizing the use of native species in creating a healthy and resilient ecosystem with multiple benefits to communities and wildlife.
  - Diane Cameron, Conservation Program Director at the Audubon Society delivered the third lecture in the series on Restoring the Chesapeake Bay through Citizens' Actions.
  - The fourth lecture in the Series held on December 1, 2015 featured a panel discussion on Smart Waste: An Integrated Approach to Waste Management. Experienced and regional leaders addressed issues in waste management: trash disposal, recycling and composting. Speakers included: Neil Seldman (President, Institute for Local Self-

- Reliance); Adam Ortiz (Director, Prince George's County Department of Environment); Bill Davidson (Montgomery County Department of the Environment); Steven Birchfield (Maryland Environmental Services—Western PG County); Brian Flores (Compost Crew); and Cindy Dyballa (Co-Chair Environment Committee, Takoma Park).
- “Healthy and Safe Lawns” is the title of the fifth lecture, to be held on April 21, 2016, in celebration of Earth Day. Montgomery County Council recently passed Bill 52-14 “Healthy Lawns,” which restricts the use of non-essential pesticides on private lawns, health care facilities and playgrounds. Two speakers will discuss the ramifications of the new law and alternatives to the use of pesticides on residential lawns.
  - As a follow-up to the December 1, 2015 panel presentation on Smart Waste, the E&E Committee members met with members of the Board and Village staff to address how to make Village residents more aware of what could/should be placed in their recycling bins and what should go into trash. Major problems include plastic bags, which clog the recycling equipment. Michael Younes briefed the Village refuse and recycling crews to reinforce the "do" and "don't" of what is appropriate for trash pick-up and what is inappropriate. Inappropriate items placed in recycling will be left at the resident's home. Updated guidance on recycling will be included in the New Residents' Welcome Packets
  - Prior to the lecture on Smart Waste, residents of Chevy Chase Village and neighboring communities visited the Western Yard Waste and Food Waste Composting Facility in Upper Marlboro, Prince Georges County, on November 23, 2015. Steven Birchfield and colleagues took us on a highly informative tour of the food composting pilot activity. This public composting facility is the only one in Maryland-- a pilot to demonstrate how food waste can be transformed in compost with a positive impact on our environment! Food waste is delivered from multiple private and public organizations, placed under specialized covers where air is pumped in to speed up the decomposition process. Eight weeks after entering the process, it emerges as high quality compost, to be sold commercially.
  - The E&E Committee worked with Village Staff and Board Members on a household survey on resident interest in a food waste composting facility organized by the Village. As a result of the considerable interest by residents, members of the Village have the opportunity to sign up for The Compost Crew Composting Program at a discount. The Compost Crew provides airtight bins and compostable bags, which are picked up every week. Waste is processed at a nearby facility.
  - The E&E Committee also monitored, reviewed and discussed with George Leventhal's staff the implications of the recently passed **Montgomery County Healthy Lawns Bill 52-14**. The Committee also arranged for a lecture on the subject to be delivered as part of the Sustainable Living Series to the Board and Village residents, to help them understand the impact of the

new County legislation and alternatives to the use of chemicals on residential lawns.

- Continued involvement with the Village to assess the effectiveness of recycling efforts, particularly related to the use of the new (larger) recycling bins distributed to households, and impacts on contractors' access.
- Continued representation on the Western Grove Park Committee to encourage native plantings and natural landscaping. Reviewed alternative landscape plans for the Village Hall emphasizing native species, at the request of the Parks Committee.
- Collaborated with neighboring communities and organizations such as the Little Falls Watershed Alliance and Bethesda Green to identify good environmental practices, which could be shared with Village residents.
- Published articles in the Crier on Recycling, Responsible Pesticide Use, Tips on Sustainable Living and Reducing Carbon Footprint at Home and at Work, in support of our Environmental Education objectives.

### **Activities and Emphasis in 2016**

During 2016, the Environment and Energy Committee has agreed to focus its efforts around the following themes:

- Education and Outreach (e.g., through the Sustainable Living Lecture Series and regular articles in the *Village Crier*)
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation
- Green Energy Alternatives
- Recycling and Compositing
- Collaboration with neighboring communities on issues of common concern
- Measuring results

#### **Other Activities**

- Continuing support to the Parks Committee and other CCV Committees in areas of overlapping interest
- Reducing pollution in the Village
- Biodiversity-friendly landscaping and storm-water management
- Recruiting new members

Submitted by the Environment and Energy Committee  
April 16, 2016